(iii) Every person undertaking execution of any contract or work or job requiring procurement of iron and steel material from sources outside the provision of the Act shall furnish a declaration in the prescribed format to the head of the department/organisation/agency/ contractor. The Authority to whom such declaration is submitted, shall examine the same and if found essential for the completion or execution of the work, forward the same to the Secretary of the concerned Department of Government of India with recommendation/comments for clearance.

Privatisation of Steel Plants

709. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan for privatisation of Salem, Chennai and Vishakhapatnam Steel Plants;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the interests of workers of these Steel Plants after privatisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) to (c) The financial and business restructuring package for Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) that was approved by the Government in February, 2000 *inter-alia*, envisaged formation of a Joint Venture (JV) for Salem Steel Plant (SSP) with a view to reviving the plant, while protecting the jobs of the existing employees. Accordingly, adequate measures are being taken to protect the interests of existing employees. In the contractual documents, provisions have been made whereby the terms and conditions of employment would not be inferior to their existing one.

The Disinvestment Commission recommended writing off of the entire accumulated losses of the Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant as on 31.3.1999 alongwith disinvestment of not less than 51% of its remaining equity to a strategic buyer. No decision has been taken on this recommendation of the Disinvestment Commission.